



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SRI LANKA

SNAPSHOT

Restoring Resiliency through Education

Youth in the North get a second chance through accelerated learning unit in Vavuniya North.



(Rohan Mudalige, - DAI)

Eager to learn, students enthusiastically responded to the establishment of the accelerated learning unit.

Over 7,500 students in Vavuniya North were able to take their third term examinations free of charge due to the commitment of the Zonal Education Department through an Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) intervention.

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

December 2010 – After years of displacement and conflict deprived them of schooling, Sri Lankan youth in the north are getting a second chance. An accelerated learning program established by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) is helping hundreds of students, many of them girls, catch up on the schooling they missed due to the conflict.

With OTI support, the Vavuniya North Zonal Education Authority set up an Accelerated Learning Unit. 767 students from 23 schools received instruction on three sets of model exams and 27 specialized seminars in preparation for the GCE O/L exams, which qualify students to graduate from middle school.

One female student who had been forcibly recruited on two different occasions by the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) said, "When I joined school all I could think about was suicide, but my mother and my teachers pushed me to concentrate on my studies. After this accelerated learning program, I feel confident in my capacity and will definitely qualify in the GCE O/L. This program has opened my eyes and my life."

Vavuniya North faced huge educational challenges due to limited resources for schools, a lack of qualified teachers, and large gaps in student learning due to the conflict. Through OTI's program, the Zonal Education Department was able to meet the tremendous need for improved education access and attainment among youth most severely affected by the country's conflict.

Following OTI's program, the Zonal Education Department in Vavuniya North and its mostly volunteer staff of teachers built on and extended the Accelerated Learning Unit. Going above and beyond the initial design of the program, the Zonal Education Department offered supplemental learning materials for third term examinations to 7,500 students. To encourage students who had benefited from the accelerated learning program to take the exam, third term examinations were offered free of charge to students throughout Vavuniya North – a first for the region.

Contact: Hilary Dittmore, Program Manager, e-mail: hdittmore@usaid.gov; telephone: (202) 712-5594; Web: www.usaid.gov – Keyword: OTI